

VZCZCXRO1258
RR RUEHROV
DE RUEHAE #0376 3001219
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 271219Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0567
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0035
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000376

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND EEB
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/21/2019
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KU](#) [ER](#)
SUBJECT: GSE MISMANAGEMENT OF POWER SUPPLY

REF: A. ASMARA 339
[1](#)B. 08 ASMARA 300

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d).

[1](#)1. (C) Vital lubricants for Eritrea's main generators are at least five days away from machinery that needed them a month ago (Ref A), according to Mohammed Gbepo (protect), Total's managing director in Eritrea. In a typical last minute deal, the Eritrean government (GSE) scraped together more than \$1 million to purchase 2,000 drums of specialized lubricants for its Massawa generators. Although this amount would typically last seven months, the generators have been running below standard for months and will immediately require 500 of the initial 800-drum shipment just to get back up to correct specifications. As of Oct 22, Gbepo continued, the GSE is only running two of the four generators, which could mean intermittent blackouts in Asmara and Massawa until the lubricants arrive. It could also mean that industry, such as the soap factory and the brewery, will be forced to run on generators. As of midnight Oct 27, large sections of Asmara, including the embassy compound, have experienced power failure.

[1](#)2. (C) Gbepo expressed continued frustration with the GSE. The government refuses to enter into a contract to ensure a regular supply of the needed lubricants, and instead demands immediate delivery at the last minute. He told poloff the GSE once sent a military official with \$120,000 stuffed in a suitcase to try to bribe him into supplying the lubricants more quickly. Gbepo reiterated the GSE is doing extensive damage to its generators by waiting until the last minute to resupply the lubricants.
McMULLEN